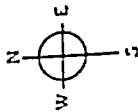


The numbers correspond to those in the "List of Monuments"

# DEHLI

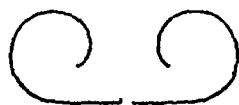


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SHAH JAHAN

HISTORICAL MONUMENTS  
OF DEHLI  
AND THEIR  
CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE



*DEVI DAYAL MATHUR*  
*Archaeological Department.*

*Published by*

**Messrs YOUNGMAN & COMPANY**

**Government Publishers and Booksellers**

**Nai Sarak DEHIL**

## PREFACE

With a view to stimulate interest in the cultural remains of India an attempt has been made in this little book to present an account of the classical monuments of Dehli in a handy and compact form.

Much of the information contained in this volume has been drawn from the Reports and Memoirs of the Archæological Survey of India but the works of other writers such as Dr. Vincent Smith, James Fergusson, E.B. Havell, Sir John Marshall, Sir Wolsley Haig, and Mr. Percy Brown have been fully consulted. In addition, opinions of various competent observers have also been given in their relevant places.

*300, Park Road, Bombay 4*

I must express my gratitude to my friends Pandit Desh Raj Sharma, B.S. Bhatnagar and Prof M Mujeeb for their valuable criticism. I am thankful to Mr B.S. Sitholey for his suggestions some of which I have adopted after careful consideration.

I must also acknowledge the kind permission accorded to me by the authorities of the Archæological Department to reproduce in this booklet a plan and some of the photographs which are now the property of that Department.

D.D.M.

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*From a miniature painting by a  
Delhi artist in the possession of  
Col H B. Hanna, late B.S.C. re-  
produced by Messrs. M C Lagan  
& Cumming of Edinburgh*

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## INTRODUCTION

Dehli, among the many interesting places in India, occupies a position of unique importance, in that it has not only a historical past of considerable antiquity during which various dynasties rose and fell, but is at present the capital of India and a centre of diverse activities which, in course of time, will determine the future history of this vast sub-continent. With a background extending to the hoary past of epic ages, Dehli presents to the historian and students of our material culture the various stages of evolution in Indian Art and Architecture. It is here that art and culture have flourished for nearly nine centuries and it may be anticipated that further impetus to them will be given from this place round which now centre the intellectual political, social and artistic elements of the country. Here stand the two glorious stone pillars of Asoka with edicts over 2000 years old inscribed on them, and it is here again that time has spared for us one of the most remarkable remnants of

antiquity in the form of a steel pillar, bearing testimony to the scientific achievement and metallurgical skill of Indian craftsmen several centuries before the coming of the Muhamadans to India

James Fergusson, who in spite of his orthodox views is still considered an authority on Indian architecture, was constrained to remark that "it opens our eyes to an unsuspected state of affairs to find the Hindus at that age capable of forging a bar of iron larger than any that have been forged even in Europe up to a very late date and not frequently even now. This is no small praise coming from a writer of Fergusson's authority and it shows clearly to what heights of achievement the forgers of the pillar must have raised their art

Again, it is on the plains of Delhi that we find standing the colossal pile of the Qutub Minar admitted to be the most magnificent and the highest tower of its kind ever raised by the master craftsmen of any country

It need hardly be mentioned that like historical and political conditions art also changes with the times. In this age we have

almost completely forgotten art and lost the sense for beauty as a result of our long continued subjection and it should not therefore be surprising that no work of any outstanding merit comparable with examples of the past has been produced during the last century or two.

The future national education will no doubt lay proper emphasis on the study of art which will help in gradually developing the sense of beauty in us. It will also be a powerful factor in eliminating our narrow communal outlook and urge the people towards an appreciation of their wonderful heritage.

Glaning at the past, we find that India was instrumental in civilising the several less cultured races who, from time to time, invaded the country, and what was more astonishing and without parallel anywhere in the world, in absorbing them in the social structure of the community of which they have since formed an integral part. The historian Ferishta tells us that Mahmud of Ghazni on return from one of his plundering expeditions took over five thousand captives with him which included

master masons and craftsmen and that these latter were pressed into service to build for him, many a fine structure in the city of Ghazni which he proudly called the 'Celestial Bride'. Of the ancient city of Mathura, associated with the name of Lord Krishna, Mahmud has given us a glimpse when in writing to his Governor at Ghazni he says, 'There are here (at Mathura) a thousand edifices as firm as the faith of the faithful nor is it likely that this city has attained its present condition but at the expense of many millions of *dinars* nor could such another be constructed under a period of 200 years

The famous Arabian traveller Alberuni who visited this country in the beginning of the 11th century, expressed his astonishment at and admiration for the works of Hindu builders 'Our people he said when they see them wonder at them and are unable to describe them much less to construct anything like them

At a later date, another great writer Abul Fazal, Akbar's chronicler, expressed his admiration for Hindu paintings with the remark

that "it passes our conception of things, few indeed in the whole world can compete with them

Indians have thus every reason to feel proud of this priceless heritage of theirs, and every one who cares for culture and civilization will earnestly wish that the artistic traditions in which this ancient land is still so rich should be preserved for posterity. Unfortunately, the villages from where spring our master-craftsmen are now, through the infiltration of urban vulgarities, being swept into the ambit of so-called modernisation and it is this fountain-head of our spiritual impulse and culture that specially requires to be protected. "Even in its ruins, this ancient country has a lesson for the world," says Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who, though second to none in the love of his motherland, has a breadth of vision which encompasses all that is noble and worthy of admiration in every part of the world.



## THE BASIS OF INDIAN ART AND CULTURE

In India, from the very beginning art has had its roots in religion. Now, religion is not a view, nor only a phase of life in this country but life itself. Art therefore, is permeated throughout by the religious impulse and traditions.

The beginnings of art in India belong to the very dawn of human civilization and the real measure of its vitality will be apparent from the fact that its traditions are still alive in the secluded villages where the pernicious influences of modern civilization have not yet penetrated. The southern part of the country has by its remoteness been completely fortunate in escaping the ravages of invasions and has consequently preserved almost intact the ancient traditions of art. As an instance the famous sculpture of Siva Nataraja could only be produced in such environments because the ancient principles of art had not been vitiated by any foreign influences but retained their basic vigour in all its pristine purity.

Going back to the prehistoric period we find that the dancing figure sculptured by the artist of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro excels in rhythm, pose and restraint any work of antiquity in India which has come down to us so far. These superb achievements forestalled by several centuries, the technically highly finished statuary of the Greeks represented in what is known as the Gandhara School of sculpture which competent critics are now agreed in considering as more of archaeological importance than of aesthetic value.

During historic times there is ample evidence to indicate a greater emphasis on religion as the motivating impulse and guiding factor in the creative work of Indian artists. Works depicting every day social life were, besides the purely religious aspect, also utilised by them as adjuncts towards an interpretation of spiritual culture. The process was continued with remarkable consistency throughout the mediaeval period and has not entirely disappeared even today.

For the understanding of Indian art, a knowledge of the principles, symbols and imagery

is absolutely indispensable. It is a deplorable fact that modern education in India divorced as it is, from an appreciation of indigenous culture has been and is growing more and more apathetic to the underlying purpose of the place of art in civilization. The result is that modern India has no conception of standards other than those of western art which largely devoid of religious symbolism and being a reflection of materialistic tendencies and realism is far more easy for the average person to understand. National life however cannot sustain itself on borrowed material. We have to change the source of our inspiration in order to preserve our national existence. Havell who was gifted with imagination and had a really astonishing understanding of the true spirit of Indian art has given us this warning.

*'Let New India learn all that the old India has to teach before it attempts to profit by the wisdom of the west.'*

Town planning (as Ram Raz has shown in his *Essay on the Architecture of the Hindus* pp 41-7) was a science recognised in the Hindu *Shilpa Shastras* for centuries before Muslim

rule in India, and the indigenous talent of this country had already developed the art to the highest level. Who has seen and not admired those marvels of construction—the Kailasa temple at Ellora and the spacious chaitya halls of Ajanta hewn boldly and ingeniously cut out of the living rock? These examples provide us with evidence of the remarkable success achieved by Hindu and Buddhist artists in stupendous planning. Indian genius has always taken delight in ornamentation and the plastic art of imagery, not as obscuring the basic form but as adding to it a subtle balance and dignity. There is a wide spread belief that Indian architecture is overloaded with ornament which hides structural defects. This view is based on a superficial knowledge of the principles of architecture created to subserve the expression of religious idealism. Architecture in India was never only the engineer's job based on principles of symmetry and correlation bereft of any sculptural decoration and embellishment. The chisel of the carver always supplemented the master-builders' plan. The monuments of India, therefore, constitute a

co ordination of the employment of architectural principles with those of the sculptor. The panorama of gigantic sculptures known as 'Descent of Ganga' at Mahabalipuram in Southern India constitutes literally a sculptural *tour de force* unrivalled anywhere outside India.

With the coming of the Muhammadans, architectural forms underwent a change. This was inevitable, because the rulers wanted to impose their own will and their religious requirements had to be catered for. Thus what is known as "Indo Islamic architecture" began to develop. Wherever the Mohammadans established themselves they insisted on the reproduction of whatever forms they were accustomed to in or near about their homeland, leaving the architectural technique to the indigenous craftsmen, who were thus free to pursue their own principles provided they were able to meet the requirements of their employers. This the architects were able to accomplish with consummate skill so that the new style represented a composite pattern in which the basis still remained predominantly Indian. It is therefore incorrect to say that it

generally done, that the Muhammadans brought a fundamentally new style of architecture to India. Their style as we see it in Persia and Turkestan was never wholly copied but adapted and considerably modified to produce a new synthesis with a dominantly Indian note. Already in India, abundant architectural forms were available which made the transformation easier, because if these did not exist, the difficulties of adaptation would have become insuperable. The Indian masons were not versed in the idiom of foreign architecture and could not have achieved the synthesis involved in the requirements of their employers without falling back on the resources of their own architectural forms.

Muslim worship, being congregational, needed space in religious structures and this principle of spaciousness was also unconsciously adopted into secular architecture, so that Muhammadan buildings are primarily plain buildings designed more with a view to accommodate large numbers of people and would thus lack a certain rhythmic quality which however, was provided by skilled Indian con-

struction Muhammadan buildings in this country thus differ from those in others in possessing the impress of Indian art conceptions

The Hindu system of construction was trabeate based on column and architrave that of the Muslim was arcuate, based on arch and vault. Temples are crowned with pyramidal towers or lofty *Shikhharas* whereas mosques are covered with expansive domes. Decorative ornamentation in Hindu buildings consisted of plastic modelling. Modelling of the human form being prohibited by tradition Muslim architecture could permit ornamentation only in the form of line surface carving and colour decoration. Consequently the builders had to fall back upon the device of adopting the forms of conventional arabesque and geometric patterns. For the Hindus, the shrine was the real temple and the worshipper could come to it, worship and pass on in any direction. The Muslims had to congregate and it was therefore necessary to provide room for them. There can thus be no mosque without a courtyard but the Hindu courtyard is just an accessory

to the shrine of the temple. Arches and niches were adapted only to Islamic ideology. Deprived of their images and embellishment they still represented the religious symbolism of the adaptors and were not objected to by the followers of Islam who could not tolerate sculpture of the human form in round or relief.

Changes made in this way in the prevailing Hindu architecture resulted in the production of a synthetic style of architecture in which the key note was structural plainness relieved only by geometric decoration. The Hindus, on the other hand, believed in treating stone in a plastic way and modelling it into a representation of life-forms, thereby realising their philosophic concept of the basic unity of mind and matter. Decoration with them thus became an integral part of structural design. Because a certain amount of decoration of geometric pattern and conventionalised botanical forms could be introduced into mosques their austerity was toned down and they emerge from the hands of Indian craftsmen as works of architecture with a human appeal and cease to be merely aggregations of geometric forms without



-emotional content

It is hoped that this outline of the distinguishing features of Muhammadan monuments will enable the reader to form an idea of the new style that arose as a co ordination of two differing cultures and to appreciate their value in a new setting that is to say, their transformation from pure austerity and mere simplicity into structures with an ornate character and an artistic appeal

So transformed they add to the nation's cultural wealth and have a definite place in it. The architectural treasures of India, both religious and secular, are far too many to be dealt with in the compass of a small book but it is hoped that the foregoing will serve as a rough guide to the basic principles on which the monuments of Dehli, are constructed

In a lecture delivered on the 10th December 1942 Mr F H Andrews a discriminating critic made the following observations — Some of the old bridges, in grace of design put many of our modern efforts to shame. We seem to have lost our sense of the beautiful and have allowed

engineering to usurp the place of architecture. It is painful to remember that when we had a beautiful bridge an acknowledged masterpiece we pulled it down to make way for an up-to-date artistically featureless engineering *tour de force*. Of the natural genius of the oriental for art and craft there is abundant evidence and in my long and close association I have learnt to admire Indians for their manual skill and the beauty of their work. From the east, most of the arts came to the west, in the past and it may be that from the same direction salvation will come to what remains of art in the future."

It will be seen from the above that modern architecture in India, which is the outcome of unimaginative departmentalism and imposed upon the country without reference to her own tradition has led to a definite set-back. It is therefore all the more important that there should be an appreciation of ancient monuments which were raised under a different inspiration and which represent the real soul of the people, as expressed through her architecture

## THE LEGENDRY, HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND OF THE MONUMENTS OF DELHI

Most of the political activities of the Hindu rulers of Dehli remain unknown for lack of documents. The country round this city is by tradition, connected with the happenings recorded in the great epic of the Mahabharata.

According to legends, a city called Indra prastha was founded here by king Yudhishther and the fort of Indrapat or Purana Qila perhaps now stands on the site of that ancient city.

The war of the Mahabharata was fought in the remote past though it is unfortunately not yet possible to give it a precise date. The story is that the five Pandava brothers, scions of the race of Kuru were allotted Khandava prastha (an unreclaimed land) by their blind uncle and guardian who was the Ruler of Hastinapur (a city about twelve miles north east of modern Meerut) and that after clearing it with the help of Sri Krishna they built their capital here. So fair was this city that men compared it with the celestial city of Indra and called it Indraprastha.

According to the Mahabharata, the architect

Maya built for them a wonderful palace with walls, arches, columns of gold and flowers fashioned from gems which floated in tanks that had steps of rock crystal and embankments of marble inlaid with pearls. Around this palace were trees with fragrant blossoms, and swans and lotuses mingled with the jewelled flowers in the tanks. In the short space of 14 months the peerless palace was ready and a great opening ceremony was performed at which kings from many countries were present and had come laden with rich presents. A great sacrificial ceremony was held and Yudhishter was acclaimed Emperor of India.

One of the rival princes who stayed behind after every one had left was Duryodhana, and his uncle Shakuni also stayed with him. He inspected the palace built by Maya, and whilst doing so he was several times deceived by the appearance of things, so cunning were the devices employed by the architect. He drew up his robes on crossing a crystal flooring, fancying it to be water; he slipped into a tank believing it to be a glass floor, he bumped against a crystal door which looked like open space and though rendered cautious by this experience

actually fell further ahead through an open door which appeared to be closed. Such is stated to be the craftsmanship at that period. If it were true, no relics remain to us of that glorious Indraprastha. Making allowances for the exaggeration of the story teller, it may be taken that such arts and crafts as flourished at the time of the Mahabharata were highly developed.

The Pandavas laughed at the discomfiture of Duryodhana. But Duryodhana did not take it sportingly and returned home, nursing a grievance. His opportunity for settling scores with the wealthy Pandavas came soon after, when a game of dice was arranged for—the Pandava brothers forming the second party. They lost irretrievably and had to surrender their kingdom, which they had staked, and were exiled from Indraprastha for twelve years. On return from this exile, the conditions of which they had truthfully fulfilled, they passed another year in disguise, and then claimed their city and state, but were refused the restoration of even the five villages of Indrapat, Tilpat, Sonipat, Baghpat, and Panipat, to which they had finally reduced their demand.

It will be recalled that Panipat, now a town on the Dehli-Ambala route, emerged into history centuries later as the place where three decisive battles, which changed the fortunes of various dynasties, were fought.

War then ensued, and with the help of Sri Krishna of Mathura and Dvarka the Pandava brothers scored a victory, but not without the loss of many warriors and heroic kinsmen. This preyed upon their minds and though victorious, they renounced their kingdom and earthly objectives. After installing Vajranath, a relative, on the throne of Indraprastha they retired to the high Himalayas to perish in the snows. Folk songs are still sung in the Dehra Dun valley indicating the route the Pandavas took in their ascent to the icy ranges where they accomplished their self-immolation. People also speak of pilgrims having found deposited on a ledge of rock at the base of a glacier six large human skeletons which were popularly believed to be of the five brothers and their common wife, who as a result of an accidental injunction had to be married to the five brothers together.

At Indraprastha the descendants of Vajranath

reigned for thirty generations down to 'Kshemak', who was deposed by his minister 'Visarva'. This minister's dynasty lasted for about 500 years, to be followed by fifteen Gautaman Kings. Thereafter the 'Maywas' came to power. 'Rajapala', the last of the Maywas, is stated to have been attacked and killed by the Raja of Kumaon named 'Sakaditya' (Lord of Sakas). But this seems to be only a title and not the name of the Raja, for Chandragupta Vikramaditya is said to have annexed the title of Sakarī by defeating him.

At this point the name of Dillī makes its appearance. It is said that one Sarup Datta, a governor appointed by Raja Dehlu of Kanauj, founded a city on the site of Indraprastha and named it Dillī, after his lord paramount. After some time Dillī appears to have been deserted, until it was rebuilt by Visal Deo in 736 A.D. Visal belonged to the Tomara clan of Rajputs and his descendents ruled till 1151 though perhaps the actual capital was at Kanauj. Anang Pal Tomara is credited with having built a fort named Lalkot in 1060 together with a tank known as Anang Tal. One of his sons, Suraj Pal, constructed another tank still famous as Suraj

Kund.

Anang Pal's daughter, who was married to Someswar, son of Visal Deo, ruler of Ajmer, gave an heir to the throne of Dehli in the person of Prithvi Raj Chauhan. This boy was adopted by Anang Pal in 1169, and eventually succeeded him. His reign lasted for 22 years. He was the last Hindu sovereign of India.

The reign of Prithvi Raj is memorable. He built a city and fortress known as Qila-i-Rai Pithora, which contained twenty-seven beautiful temples. An inscription on the eastern gate of the present Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque discloses that the beautifully carved pillars now in the cloisters of the mosque formed part of the material obtained by demolishing the temples of Prithvi Raj. The destruction of twenty-seven beautiful temples—to whose beauty the pillars are now a tragic witness—was an act of pure vandalism and gives a measure of the fanaticism to which those in power could descend. Prithvi Raj was a very brave and chivalrous king and his name is still venerated as that of a popular hero, whose numerous exploits are described in detail in *Prithvi Raj Raso*, a poetical work from the hand of his court bard Chandra Bardai.



reigned from 1211-1236. He succeeded in saving his kingdom from the raids of Mongols under Chingiz Khan. Altamash proved to be a competent ruler and was succeeded by his accomplished and brave daughter Sultana Razia. After a three years reign (1236-39) she was murdered and her death was followed by several years of confusion, in which one puppet king gave way to another. Eventually her brother Nasir ud din Mahmood, came to the throne in 1246, in a country that was still in a state of complete anarchy. His minister was Balban, who ascended the throne in 1266 and carried on till 1286. The Slave Dynasty ended in 1290. The Khiljis appeared on the scene with Jalal ud din who was kind and gentle, simple, and forbearing. Ala ud din occupied the throne by murdering Jalal ud-din, who was his uncle as well as father in law. He suspected the loyalty of some of his Muslim nobles and had them killed. Fearing a Mongol plot, he had had 30 000 of his Mongol subjects massacred in cold blood, although most of them were quite innocent. Like others Ala ud-din Khilji was absolutely intolerant. From his conquest, in Gujrat and the Deccan he is said to have amassed fabulous

wealth. He laid siege to the fortress of Chittorgarh—the stronghold of Rajput valour—but was foiled in his attempts to capture it. Led by Queen Padmini, ladies of the royal household and other women folk burnt themselves on funeral pyres to save their honour, while the men held back the enemy and were killed fighting. This heroism of Rajput women is unparalleled in the annals of any country and has shed lustre on Rajput character and history.

Ala-ud-din reimposed the special poll tax called *Jazia* on his Hindu subjects which was a great hardship particularly on the poor.

Among the chief buildings erected at Dehli during his reign are the Alai Minar, Alai Gate, and the highly ornate screen arches in the Quwat-ul-Islam mosque.

Among the Tughlaq Sultans of Dehli the first was Ghias-ud-din Tughlaq, who was formerly the Governor of Multan and was elected to the throne in 1321 after defeating Khusro Khan. Being a capable ruler, he was successful in restoring peace and order in the Kingdom. Bengal and Deccan were brought under subjugation and internal administration

improved to some extent. However, the King met with premature death through the collapse of a pavillion specially constructed at the instigation of his son, Jana Khan who succeeded as Muhammad bin Tughlak in 1325.

Muhammad bin Tughlaq was a combination of extraordinary features of character though possessing scholarly and philosophic trends he had in his nature a strain of monstrous cruelty. His schemes to conquer Persia, Khorasan and China resulted in miserable failures. Intolerant of the widespread criticism of his policy he gave the fantastic order to transfer the capital from Dehli to Deogiri in the Deccan. People had to abandon their homes and to face terrible conditions on the march. Thousands perished. This mad man ruled for 25 years and the country suffered from exorbitant taxation, famine and pestilence. Ibn Batuta, a native of Tangier in Northern Africa visited India during his reign and has left an interesting account of the conditions of the country and of the people.

He was succeeded by Firoz Shah Tughlaq in 1351, who ruled for thirty seven years. Firoz improved the condition of the people by revising

the land revenue system, and dug canals to help in cultivation. He built hospitals, schools, rest houses, and laid out gardens and cities. Firozabad, Jaunpore, Fatehabad and Hissar owe their existence to him. He had a passion for buildings. He was cultured enough not to destroy architectural monuments and brought two monolithic pillars of Asoka to Dehli, one from Tobra (Ambala District) and the other from Meerut, which are still preserved. Firoz was a remarkable and just ruler.

After him, Nasir-ud-din Muhammad Shah occupied the throne of Dehli for four years (1390-4). During this period rebellions broke out all over and the royal power declined.

Mahmud Shah Tughlaq followed him and his long reign of twenty years completed the downfall of the Tughlaq dynasty. It was in his time that Timur, a chief from Central Asia, invaded India in 1398. Mahmud Shah was defeated and Timur sacked the city of Dehli and plundered and slaughtered the inhabitants. Timur took away all he could carry, leaving behind him anarchy, famine, pestilence and untold misery.

On the extinction of the Tughlaq dynasty

a Sayyid King, Khizar Khan who was the governor of Multan at the time of Timur's invasion and had taken Lahore also, occupied the throne of Dehli in 1413. He ruled till 1421.

His son Mubarak Shah ruled from 1421 to 1434, when he was assassinated at the instigation of his Wazir. Then a grandson of Khizar Khan, named Muhammad Shah, sat on the throne. After his death Bahlol Lodi, the Governor of Lahore came and seized Dehli in 1450.

He ruled from 1450 to 1488. On his death, Sikandar Lodi ascended the throne. He founded the city of Agra and made it his capital. He was a strong ruler but a confirmed bigot. He died in 1517 and was buried in a garden tomb, the first of its kind in Dehli.

Sikandar was succeeded by his son Ibrahim Lodi who, in turn, was defeated at Panipat by Babar in 1528 and was the last of the Pathan Kings in India. Just as in 1192 Raja Jai Chand had invited Shahab ud din Muhammad Ghorî from Kabul, similarly now Daulat Khan Lodi, governor of Lahore, invited Babar in 1524 to invade the Dehli Kingdom of Ibrahim Lodi. Babar welcomed the opportunity. With

a comparatively small army he crossed the Indus and marched to Lahore, but met with unexpected opposition from Daulat Khan. Babar went back and returned the next year, defeated Daulat Khan, and captured Lahore. Babar now advanced to Dehli, but had to meet the opposition of Ibrahim Lodi at the field of Panipat in 1526. He inflicted defeat on Ibrahim, who fell on the battlefield. After this it was not difficult to capture both Dehli and Agra.

The period between the victory of Babar over Ibrahim in 1526 and 1645 the year of completion of the Taj Mahal at Agra is one of the constructive periods in Indian history. From a fugitive in exile, Babar won a kingdom in India. He was a brave fighter, a capable administrator, an author, poet and artist and an enlightened patron of arts and letters, but curiously enough he liked nothing Indian and has said so in his autobiography.

His son and successor, Humayun, was equally capable but lacked several qualities of his distinguished father. He was affectionate and kind and in some degree emotional. He was not harsh to his brothers who on several occasions displayed hostility against him.

The revolt of an Afghan chief, Sher Shah Suri, in Behar, troubled him very much. On being defeated, he retired to Persia. The birth of a son, Akbar, at Amarkot in Sindh in 1542 was the only event of some joy to him. In Persia he obtained the help of Shah Tehmasp. After sixteen years of exile he returned with a fresh army and recovered his Kingdom.

During Humayun's absence from India, Sher Shah Suri had acquired great power and had proved himself a capable ruler. He had a taste in architecture. A small but beautiful mosque in Purana Qila still stands to his credit. Sher Shah's own tomb in Sahasram (Behar) is an outstanding architectural production in its simplicity and sterdignity.

After the death of Sher Shah in 1545, his son Islam Shah was raised to the throne of Dehli. His reign lasted for eight years. On his death Muhammad Adil Shah assumed sovereignty in 1554. He was a worthless ruler, and left the conduct of affairs in the hands of his minister Hemu, whom Humayun, assisted by Bairam Khan, defeated and killed on his return in 1555 from Persia, occupying Dehli and Agra.

At Dehli Humayun built a fort which he named as Deen Panah, now called Purana Qila. Humayun did not live long thereafter, as in 1556 he died of injuries received as a result of a fall from the stair-case of his Library. Humayun's widow Haji Begam, built an elegant tomb in Dehli in memory of her husband. The tomb is Persian in style, having been designed by the Persian architect, Mirak Mirza Ghiyas, who had come with her on her return from exile in Persia.

Akbar was only 13 when Humayun died. He passed through strenuous times before he was able to consolidate his power.

He was a great patron of arts. He built the beautiful fort at Agra and made this city his capital. The stately edifices at Fatehpur Sikri and at Sikandra and the fort at Agra bear witness to his love of architecture and his manly and fine tastes. His tact and administrative acumen made him friendly with the Rajputs, with whose help he consolidated his empire in India. He surrounded himself with able and cultured men and was ready to profit from their advice. His influence was constructive and he succeeded in achieving



more than could be expected. Tolerant, just and kindly, he brought various religious ideals together in a spirit of sympathy and with a view to producing a unified society and reconciling antagonistic tendencies. The buildings of Akbar are by their simplicity, dignity and power without doubt the finest Muhammadan architectural monuments in India.

Akbar was succeeded in 1605 by Jehangir, who was literally wedded to art. His wife Nur Jahan was in reality the inspirer of his ideas. Cultured and intelligent she was a potent influence from which Jehangir profited considerably. She built in Agra a tomb for her father Itmad ud daula, which is exquisite in its own way.

Jahangir loved nature and had refined tastes which made him a connoisseur in painting. He possessed a fine art gallery. He closely supervised the construction of the magnificent mausoleum for Akbar at Sikandra near Agra, the inspiration for which, however, came from his father. In Kashmir he laid out famous gardens near Srinagar—the Shalamar and Nishat Baghs celebrated for beautiful fountains and artistic arrangements.

After twenty-two years of reign Jahangir died in 1627, on his way back from Kashmir, and was buried at Shahdara, near Lahore.

He was followed by Shah Jehan who ruled for thirty years (1628-58). Dehli became the capital of the Muhammadan Empire and the centre of gravity of Mughal culture. Shah Jehan founded the modern town of Dehli in 1638, and named it Shahjehanabad. He planned the Red Fort and *Chandni Chowk* (the Moonlit Square). His wife, Mumtaz Mahal, built the Fatehpuri mosque at the other end of it. Architecture was at its peak at this time. For the adornment of the capital the Jamé-Masjid was constructed. In the Red Fort, the Diwan-i-Am was provided with a beautiful canopy. The Diwan-i-Khas was adorned with a peacock throne made of jewels of all kinds. The throne has been taken away as loot. These buildings are graceful and elegant. Shah Jehan built the Moti Masjid or "Pearl Mosque" in the Fort at Agra, a fairy structure at once simple and of surprising beauty. In the Taj Mahal, raised to the memory of his wife, he has achieved a monument supremely worthy of a great association. "It was", in the words of Havell, "the

desire of the builder that the fairest and most lovable of Indian women should have a monument as fair and lovely as herself'

Shah Jehan's buildings afforded employment and patronage to thousands of skilled architects, artists and craftsmen from various countries

In 1658, Shah Jehan fell seriously ill and this led to a war of succession among his sons Aurangzeb murdered his rival brothers and seized the throne. Shah Jehan was confined in Agra Fort, where he died, some say, under suspicious circumstances

Aurangzeb was a skilful general but fanatical beyond measure, cruel and unscrupulous. He was wholly given to political intrigues and imperialism, and had no taste for cultural activities. He enjoyed no peace on ascending the throne and spent half of his reign in suppressing disturbances—the result of his own bigoted policy. He fanatically pulled down the biggest temples at Mathura and Benares and persecuted the Hindus

Babar has recorded in his autobiography that in India the professions of art and trade were hereditary. There could never be a dearth

of skilled workmen at any period. State patronage, if denied to them in one part of the country at any time due to any communal policy, did not deprive them of opportunity and patronage from another rising sovereign or ruler. Aurangzeb's policy of persecution of Hindus who had helped to build the empire resulted in the decay of Mughal architecture. The artists and master craftsmen migrated to the Hindu States in Rajputana and Central India, where they built palaces and stately homes for the local chiefs and their nobles.

Political conditions grew worse after the death of Aurangzeb and the empire began rapidly to disintegrate. This process was hastened by the rise of the Marhattas in the south and the Sikhs in the north. The English pressed from Bengal in the east, and though puppet emperors with their empire considerably restricted still reigned at Dehli, their power had gone beyond repair. With the revolution of 1857 the Mughal Empire crashed to its doom, never to rise again. By skilful handling, the British East India Company wrested all power from other hands and became the virtual rulers of the country. Later on, the East India Com-

pany was dissolved and India became a dependency of England. The Mughal Empire has passed into history.

The British administration imposed on the country its own ways in the building tradition. This resulted in the elimination of indigenous arts and a growth in the patronage of the western styles of buildings. The prevailing system of education also did not provide opportunities or scope for the study and practical application of Indian architectural traditions. In such an atmosphere the arts and crafts wilted and lost their vitality and took refuge in the Indian states where, since then, they have managed still to preserve a foothold. This process continued until, in 1904, Lord Curzon, the then Governor General of India, had the wisdom to recognise the great value of art to the civilisation of the country and thanks to his efforts, an Archaeological Department was created with the primary purpose of conserving the country's ancient monuments.

Credit must be freely and generously given to him for saving India's monuments for future generations. It is rather ironical that Aurangzeb, descendent of Akbar, should have been an

iconoclast whereas a foreign Viceroy, possessing nothing in common with the people of the country should extend a sheltering hand to the architectural treasures of India.

## 1. THE QUTUB MINAR

'Standing on the ancient site of Qila Rai Pithora, 5 miles to the south of New Delhi, the Qutub is a majestic symbol of the erstwhile Muslim dominance in India. It is said to have been raised as a tower to proclaim the might of Islam. Both in design and finish it surpasses its Egyptian rival, the minaret of the mosque of Hasan at Cairo.

Fergusson, a writer on Indian architecture, calls this Minar the most beautiful example of its class known to exist anywhere'

The construction was begun in 1199 by the first Sultan, Qutub ud din Aibak, and later taken on by his son in law and successor, Sultan Altamash. Though it cannot be stated for certain the Qutub would appear to have been designed by clever architects from Ghazni. The execution of carvings rich and graceful, was undoubtedly the handiwork of indigenous craftsmen. The calligraphy of the Kufic and Tughra scripts, drawn by Muslim and carved in stone by Hindu masons, is bold and very remarkable.

The three lower stories are finely proportioned. The base diameter is 47 feet and at

the top only 9 feet. The height of the tower is 238 feet. There are five storeys in all, marked by corbelled balconies and decorated with bands of inscriptions. The symmetry is perfect. A feature for special notice is the beautiful honeycomb work below the brackets of the first storey balcony. Semi-circular and angular flutings produce a distinctively artistic effect. The material used is red sandstone, but the two upper storeys are faced with white marble, and were rebuilt by Sultan Firuz Shah Tughlaq in 1368. At the entrance doorway is an inscription of Sikandar Lodi dated 1503.

From the minar the view of the surrounding landscape is impressive. All around lie scattered ruins of old buildings—vestiges of the dynasties that have come and gone, while on the horizon can be seen the modern edifices of New Delhi.

## 2. THE QUWWAT-UL-ISLAM MOSQUE

Though not in as good a state of preservation as its prototype, The “Arhai-din-ka-Jhounpra” at Ajmere, this was the first mosque built in Delhi by Qutub-ud-din Aibak. Its name, which means the power of Islam, indi-



ates that it was erected as a victory memorial to Muslim arms

The mosque stands on the plinth of a Hindu temple and was evidently constructed with the material taken from despoiled temples. This is substantiated by an inscription dated 1192, which appears on the east gateways of the mosque.

Built in the shape of a simple rectangle measuring 214 feet by 149 feet, it has approaches to the centre from all the four directions and is also provided with a *zenana* gallery reached by narrow staircases built into the wall. The sculptures on the Hindu pillars have been roughly mutilated. The construction seems to have been done in haste. The screen of arches was a subsequent addition, made some years later. It is a wonderful achievement. The elaborate surface patterning of ornament is a brilliant fusion of Islamic and Hindu modes. In 1230, Altamash doubled the area of the mosque and also added an outer court to it. The mosque is now in ruins. It is doubtful whether it was fully constructed. It may be that the intention was to destroy the temple and raise a patched

up structure to answer for a mosque. Whatever remains of the fine Hindu sculptures on slabs and pillars is in accord with the development of India's plastic art before the advent of the Muhammadans. This art can be studied fully in preserved temples at Mudhera, Dabhoi, Gwalior, Khajuraho and in the Bhuvaneshwar group in Orissa on the south-east coast. There is a carved lintel built in one of the walls depicting the scene of Sri Krishna's birth, which shows that one of the original temples was dedicated to Vishnu.

### 3. THE IRON PILLAR

In the courtyard of the Qutub mosque stands an iron pillar of rustless metal. It is a remarkable monument to the scientific achievements of the ancient Hindus. It must have originally stood in a Vishnu temple and bore an effigy of Garuda—the mythological eagle-like bird. An inscription on the pillar records its erection in memory of king Chandra (Gupta), whose exploits all over India, including his conquest of Bengal and the north-west, are mentioned therein. The height above the ground is 23 feet, diameter 16 inches, and the weight is

estimated to be 6 or 7 tons. Though a millennium and a half has passed since the pillar was wrought, it has safely withstood the ravages of weather and shows no signs of rusting. This has been attributed to the extraordinarily pure quality of its iron—a remarkable testimony to the knowledge and skill of the metallurgists of that period.

#### 4. THE ALAI GATE

A few yards to the south east from the Qutub Minar stands a magnificent gateway erected in 1310 A.D. by Ala-ud-din Khilji, who called himself the Alexander of the time (*Sikandar Sinā*). It is a beautiful piece of architecture deserving of every praise. The proportions are perfect and the decoration *tasteful*. The *recessed* corner arches support a plain spherical dome over the square chamber. The perforated windows at the side are effective.

Pierced and fretted windows are made much use of. These are not purely Islamic, as it is often asserted. Their prototypes are found in the beautiful pierced windows of Chalukyan times at Pattadakal and later at Ellora.

## 5. THE ALAI MINAR

Begun by Alaud-din Khilji in 1315 A D., it remained incomplete owing to the Sultan's death. It was apparently estimated to tower up to 500 feet.

## 6. THE TOMB OF IMAM ZAMIN

Situated to the east of the Alai gate, this tomb is not contemporaneous with the other buildings of the Qutub group. It enshrines the remains of Imam Zamin, who came to Dehli in the reign of Sikandar Lodi. He was buried here in the time of the Moghal Emperor Humayun, in 1537.

This tomb is devoid of any architectural merit and is a small structure constructed of red sand-stone superimposed on a square plinth polished in stucco. It bears an inscription in Naskh characters over the doorway.

## 7. THE TOMB OF SULTAN ALTAMASH

There is no inscription to show that Altamash was laid to rest here, but it is traditionally known to be his tomb. In its form and dimensions it is a simple piece of work,

consisting of a small square chamber in red sandstone, measuring 20 feet across. The outline is in grey stone, relieved by red. The walls are abnormally thick. The main entrance is to the east, but there are other openings on the north and south. The mehrab is on the west. The tomb is roofless. Cunningham has stated that it may have been originally covered by an overlapping circular dome carried on in the form of a squinch arch.

The interior is lavishly carved and decorated with passages from the Quran.

### 8. THE TOMB OF SULTAN GHARI

This tomb is regarded as the oldest monument of its class in India. It was built by Altamash for his son, Sultan Ghari, in 1231-32. The plan differs from that of other tombs. It stands in the middle of a square walled enclosure, with round turrets and an arched entrance on its eastern side, approached by a flight of steps. The pillars, capitals, architraves and most of the decorated motifs are of Hindu origin and though the arches and domes figure prominently in its design, their construction is on the Hindu corbel principle.

The tomb in the centre, an octagonal chamber with flat roof supported on pillars, is sunk below the level of the ground. It has thus more the features of a cave.

## 9. THE CITY OF SIRI

This, the second of the seven cities of Dehli (1303 A.D.) is situated about two miles to the north east of Qila-i-Rai Pithora, and is now represented by the small village of Shahpur Jat. It was the capital of the Khilji king till 1321 A.D. Ghias-ud-din Tughlaq founded a third city at Tughlaqabad. The Siri fortifications were built by Ala-ud-din Khilji. Nothing is now left of these, except some fragments of the perimeter walls but even these give some idea of the military architecture of the early Muslim period. The round and tapering bastions, their lines of embrasures and curvilinear battlements indicate that the style was not altogether indigenous.

## 10. HAUS KHAS

This was built by Ala-ud-din Khilji in 1303 A.D., and it was in its vicinity that the army of Timur pitched its camps after defeating

Muhammad Tughlaq in 1398. A group of buildings can be observed from this tank. The group consists of a number of structures including a college and a tomb added in the time of Firoz Shah Tughlaq. The college, a double storeyed building is now in ruins. The colonnades are two or three bays deep, interrupted at intervals by square domed halls. The tomb of Firoz Shah, prominent in the centre, is crowned with a single dome raised on an octagonal drum. Glazed tiles have been used in embellishment.

## 11 TUGHLAQABAD

This is the third of seven cities of Delhi, and was built by Ghiasud din Tughlaq (1321-25). It stands upon an outcrop of rocks surrounded by ravines and a lake. Even in its much ruined state the fort is imposing. The high walls with bastions and battlements, steep entrance ways, lofty portals towering above the landscape, produce an impression of massiveness and grandeur.

Inside the walls of the fort which contained the city all is now in ruins. It appears that the supply of water was from tanks of which some are still extant.

## 12. ADILABAD

This city was founded by Muhammad bin Tughlaq (1324-51) son of Ghias-ud-din Tughlaq. It is a sort of miniature of Tughlaqabad and constitutes an outwork of the main city. It also is now in ruins. Muhammad Tughlaq's removal of the capital to Deogiri to which reference has been made in a previous chapter was responsible for the decay of Tughlaqabad. And as the whole corporate life of the city was disorganised it was but natural for decay and ruin to set in.

Ibn-batuta, a Moorish traveller, called the town "one of the greatest cities in the universe." Universe seems to have been limited in those times and cities were but few, but Batuta's account would show that what is now a complete wilderness as the result of a fantastic whim, was once a flourishing city.

## 13. TOMB OF GHIAS-UD-DIN TUGHLAQ

This king met his death as a result of an "accident" brought about by his own son Muhammad in 1324. The tomb, the architecture of which is massive and simple, was built in the centre of an artificial lake and has sloping



walls giving it an air of solidity. It is devoid of any exterior decoration, an indication that the Sultan's son, a parricide, desired only to cover up his father and not to erect a monument befitting a king.

The plan is square. Three of the sides have high archways, the space above the doorway being filled with a white marble lattice screen of bold pattern. The dome is of marble.

Inside the mausoleum there are three cenotaphs, which are said to be those of Tughlaq Shah (1321-4) his queen and their son Muhammad, who was none other than the wellknown Muhammad bin Tughlaq. An interesting fact in this connection may perhaps be related here. Firoz Shah Tughlaq who was the successor of Muhammad bought acquaintances from all those he had wronged and put them in a chest at the head of his tomb that he might present them when called to judgement. This seems to be the most curious expedient which the mind of man has ever conceived for obtaining the pardon of his cruel predecessor. This fact, the reliability of which there are cogent reasons to accept, incidentally throws fresh light on the fine character of Firoz Shah. Firoz Shah had

such an advanced sense of justice and compassion that according to the beliefs of the Islamic faith he tried to do a good turn to a monarch, his predecessor, so that the latter's soul might be redeemed from the punishment which is the lot of all evil-doers.

#### 14. DARGAH OF THE SAINT NIZAM-UD-DIN AULIYA

This monument is near Humayun's tomb. Nizam-ud-din Auliya, reputed to be a saint, was buried here. The marble grave is in the centre of an eighteen feet square pillared hall under a wooden canopy inlaid with mother of pearl. It is much visited by the numerous followers of the Saint. The roofless tomb of Jahanara Begam is situated at the south west corner of the main court and this monument enclosed within a lattice screen is very picturesque.

#### 15. JAHANPANAHI FORTIFICATION

Muhammad bin Tughlaq enclosed his city with a wall in 1325. He called it the "World refuge". He linked up the walls of Old Delhi on the one side and Siri on the other, and so enclosed the suburbs between them.

The wall was more than twelve yards in thickness and was constructed with rubble faced with lime. There is hardly any trace of it left now. At a little distance is the **BIJAY MANDAL**, a terraced tower like structure marking the probable site of a thousand pillared hall (*Qasre Hazar sutoon*) of Tughlaq's palace.

### 16. LAL GUMBAD

This tomb of Saint Kabir-ud din Auliya, another saint, was erected in the reign of Nasir ud din Mahmud Shah (1389-92) and seems to be a poor imitation of the tomb of Ghias ud din Tughlaq.

There is some decoration in colour, with nothing particular about it except that it was probably at this time that the Muhammadan builders thought of utilising colour for decorative purposes.

### 17. FIROZABAD

Firoz Shah Tughlaq is reputed to have built Firozabad—the fourth of the seven cities of Dehli. He is also said to have erected not less than one hundred and twenty rest houses.

Unfortunately, none of these have survived.

### 18. KOTLA FIROZ SHAH

This palace fort included a Jame' Masjid and a pyramidal structure crowned by a lofty pillar of the Emperor Asoka. This pillar was brought from Tobra, a village in Ambala district and is different from the other Asokan pillar brought by Firoz Shah from the neighbourhood of Meerut and set up in the Kushak-i-Shikar palace on the Ridge. The transportation intact of such a massive monolith, a great distance from the foot of Siwalik hills where the Jamna enters the plains; is a testimony to Firoz Shah's government and the skill that his engineers exhibited in carrying it to Dehli.

The pillar is 42 feet 7 inches long of which 4 feet 4 inches are sunk in the masonry. Asoka's edicts (3rd century B.C.) are engraved on it in Brahmi script which still retains its clearness.

A later inscription upon the same pillar records the victories of the Chauhan prince Visal Deo and is dated 1220 in the Samvat era corresponding to 1163 A.D.

### 19 TOMB OF KHAN I JAHAN TILANGANI

Situated in the vicinity of the Durgah of Hazrat Nizam ud din Auliya near Humayun's tomb, this tomb was built in 1369 A D and is of grey granite, white marble and plaster

It is octagonal in shape and is surmounted by a single dome There are verandahs with low arches

### 20 KALI OR SANJAR MASJID

This is in old Dehli, inside the Turkman Gate and was built by Juna Shah in memory of his father Khan i jehan Tilangani

The plan is rather unusual There is no courtyard instead the area is covered by four arcades at right angles

### 21. BEGAMPURI MASJID

This large structure owes its existence to Wazir Jehan Khan who lived in the reign of Firoz Shah Tughlaq and is situated in Begampur village on the way to the Qutub Minar

The courtyard of this mosque is very large

## 22. SHAH ALAM'S MOSQUE

This monument is picturesquely situated on the bank of a *nulla* spanned by an old Pathan bridge at Wazirabad.

It was built by Shah Alam in the Tughlaq period. The chief peculiarity of this mosque is the provision of a lady's gallery in the rear corner of the prayer chamber.

## 23. TOMB OF MUBARAK SHAH SAYYID

This tomb stands in the village of Mubarakpur Kotla and in it is interred the Sayyid King murdered in 1433 at the instigation of his Wazir. He ruled from 1421 to 1433.

The construction is remarkable in so far as the central dome is higher than in the original prototypes. Pinnacles were added at the angles of the polygonal drum and the summit was crowned with a novel and striking feature in the form of an arched lantern in place of the usual finial. The height of the varandah was also raised and the eight subsidiary domes were replaced by pillared kiosks (*chhattries*).

## 24. TOMB OF TAJ KHAN AND IDGAH

This tomb was constructed in 1501 and

square solid looking structure. The  
is carried on squinch arches and an  
al pillared kiosk rises from each corner  
of

construction is very similar in character  
of other tombs of the same period. The  
one walls are inset with red sandstone.

## 25. SHISH GUMBAD

building also was erected in 1501 A.D.  
of the same style. There are no walled  
es around these structures although it  
ial to provide small mosques like the  
ttached to the tomb of Taj Khan.

## 26. BARE KHAN CHHOTE KHAN

se tombs contain graves of two of the  
of the Sayyid and Lodi dynasties. They  
doubt unimportant when compared  
e tombs of kings yet their setting is  
l, thus distinguishing them from  
place buildings.

## 27. TOMB OF MUHAMMAD SHAH

was built by Muhammad Shah's son

and successor, Alaud-din Alam Shah. The height of the dome is higher than that of Mubarak Shah's tomb. A second range of pinnacles on the verandah give the whole a symmetrical effect. In this building blue enamelled tiles have been used which set off to advantage the decorative features. The lotus finials on the dome are evidence of marked Hindu influence

## 28. TOMB OF SIKANDAR LODI

This monarch died in 1517. His tomb represents an important phase in the evolution of Indian architecture. A noteworthy feature is the spacious character of its walled enclosure.

The tomb was erected in 1518 by his son and successor Ibrahim Lodi. It was from this time that coloured enamelled tiles began to be increasingly used. The use of double dome is another new departure.

## 29. BARA GUMBAD AND MOSQUE

This is another similar structure built in 1494 A.D. and is reminiscent of the style of the Tughlaq period. The building is square and



solid looking and has a lofty dome carried on squinch arches

Attached to it is a walled court with a highly ornate mosque on one side and a low arched structure as a counterpoise on the other

The mosque is of a particular interest as the whole eastern facade as well as the interior of the prayer chamber are elegantly ornamented in plaster. The balconied windows and the comparatively larger sizes of the three domes make the exterior appearance singularly effective

### 30 MOTH KI MASJID

This large mosque owes its construction to the Prime Minister of Sikandar Lodi. There is no other mosque of this period possessing such a large and dignified prayer chamber as this one. The building is well balanced in respect of its light and shade effects

### 31 JEMALI KAMALI MASJID

This mosque is in Mehrauli near the Qutub and was built in 1532. The masonry is ashlar, faced with white marble. In comparison with

earlier structures this monument is richer and more decorative in design. The tile work and the skilful control of the interior lighting are its notable features. The ceiling is particularly remarkable. The low pitched dome is decorated with fine plaster work originally painted in red, blue and gold.

### 32 PURANA QILA

This fort stands on the old site of Indarpat and Humayun's Deen Panah and was built by Sher Shah Suri. It is commonly known as the fort of the Kauravas and the Pandavas. This was the fortified city which followed Firozabad. Though now a ruined skeleton, the massiveness of the fort can be easily imagined. Its austere and sombre tone was relieved by the embellishment of medallions of the lion and the elephant motifs on the gateways. There is an inscription dated 1545 in the Qila Kohna mosque showing that it was built by Sher Shah. This semi-Persianised mosque possesses considerable architectural qualities entitling it to a high place among the monuments of the time. It was for the personal use of the ruler and its

construction was largely supervised by him. 168 feet by 44 feet in length and breadth and 66 feet in height the building has a facade divided into five arched bays with a sumptuous surface carving, moulded brackets under the blaconies floral work round the arches, all rendered with great taste and skill

Another structure of note is the Sher Mandal. It was on the steps of this building that Emperor Humayun accidentally slipped when rising from his evening prayers and received fatal injuries

In the Khairul Manazil mosque the gateway deserves notice. Constructed in 1560 it accomodated a girl school in the upper storey where religious education was imparted

The Lal Darwaza formed the entrance to a large market place

### 33 ARAB SERAI

On entering the noble portal of the enclosure of Humayun's tomb the first structure on the right is the fine gate of the Arab Serai. It was built by Humayun's wife Hamida Bano Begam and has a large courtyard with cells all around

for the convenience of the travellers It was originally constructed to accomodate the three hundred Arabs whom the Begam had brought with her when she returned from her pilgrimage to Mecca.

### 34. TOMB OF ISA KHAN

This is situated close to the tomb of Humayun and is a well-balanced piece It is octagonal in shape and was constructed in 1547 There is a small mosque attached to it. The mausoleum has five domes and is decorated with coloured marble and tiles There is some fine plaster ornamentation inside

### 35. THE TOMB OF HUMAYUN

This is the first tomb of Mughal style built in the midst of a garden and was designed by the architect, Mirak Mirza Ghias, who had come from Iran with Hamida Bano Begam It is an elegant building. Its construction was commenced by Humayun's widow in 1556 In it are also interred his mother, his wife and his sister besides several of his near relatives and eleven Wazirs and generals It is a veritable cemetery of royalty and the nobility.

The building is an Indian adaption of Persian tombs of Saracenic Style, in Saracenic architecture the ornamentation was meagre. The arches, pillars, minarets and domes recall the arching and doming of palm groves from which the inspiration of Saracenic architecture was derived.

Placed above the facade rises a great double dome mounted on a high drum, with a combination of kiosks, topped by small cupolas and slender turrets breaking the sky line of the base. The interior is well lit through windows of perforated screens fitted within the recessed archways of the facade.

There is attractive tile work in this building. The height of the tomb is 125 feet. It is of a special interest as being possibly a model for the Taj Mahal.

Besides white marble the building of the masonry is in red sandstone. On ascending the tomb one can enjoy a magnificent view of the Purana Qila and the landscape all around.

### 36 THE TOMB OF ATGAH KHAN

This tomb is a small affair in the same style

as Humayun's tomb and is probably the work of the same architects who constructed the earlier tomb.

### 37. THE TOMB OF ADHAM KHAN

Adham Khan, the foster brother of Akbar was buried here in 1567. The tomb is commonplace and mediocre. Each angle of the pillared verandah is strengthened by a sloping buttress in accordance with the Pathan style which was introduced in the time of Firoz Shah Tughlaq.

### 38. CHAUNSATH KHAMBA

Built by Aziz Kokaltash, another foster brother of Akbar, in 1624 this building consists of a hall of sixty-four pillars of white marble surrounded by thirty-five domeshaped vaults. It contains nine sarcophagi of the family of Azam Khan, the foster father of Akbar and the most faithful companion of Humayun, whose life he saved in a battle near Kanauj.

### 39. TOMB OF KHAN-I-KHANAN

This is a large tomb, now nearly in ruins, of a son of Bairam Khan who was a minister of

Akbar It is built in imitation of the tomb of Humayun and is typically Persian It stands on a square terrace and has seventeen arched recesses on each side

#### 40 LAL QILA

The Lal Qila of Dehli is of absorbing interest to visitors from far and near Enclosed by an immense red sandstone wall it stands witness to many a colourful scene and historic tragedy up to the days of the Indian Movement of 1857

According to Bernier, Shah Jehan had felt disgusted and dissatisfied with the living conditions of Agra finding the place too hot during the summer He paid several visits to Dehli and decided to shift his capital there In 1639 his 'Superintendent of Works Makramat Khan undertook the construction of this great citadel and completed it in 1648 It took nine years to build and cost over a crore of rupees

In shape, the fort resembles an octagon running north and south with Salimgarh as a bastion on the northern side The fort was

designed with a view to uniformity in structure and the plan was approved by the Emperor. It has two imposing entrances; the **LAHORE GATE** on the western side and the **DEHLI GATE** on the southern. The fort is made of red sandstone obtained from the quarries of Rajputana

Entering the barbican forework (subsequently added by Amangzeb) in front of the Lahore Gate and passing under a long archway, one has to pass under a vaulted arcade which opens out into a large courtyard. To the east of the court is the **NAUBAT KHANA GATEWAY**, where every rider except the members of the royal family was required to dismount. As the name implies, the Naubat Khana is the place where the royal kettle-drums were kept, and was used as the proper entrance leading to the official buildings.

On the far side is the spacious **DIWAN-I-AM** or Hall of Public Audience. It measures 100 feet by 60 feet. It is well proportioned and with its graceful columns and arches serves its purpose admirably. At the back in the raised recess is a throne under a canopy



(*Nasheman* : *Zull* : *Elahi*) Below it are seats for the ministers In the back wall of the throne chamber in the Diwan-i-Am there is a large piece of very realistic *pietra dura* work believed to be the work of a Florentine silver smith Austin de Bordeaux This panel, which was brought back from South Kensington Museum and restored to its place by the late Lord Curzon, is in the traditional style of Italian renaissance There can hardly be any doubt that this panel is a later interpolation and was set in by some unknown person after the death of Aurangzeb For it is inconceivable that the portrayal of life forms which appear on it and which are against the tenets of Islam could have been tolerated either by Shah Jehan or Aurangzeb who were both very orthodox the latter particularly so This opinion has been expressed by Havell and is *prima facie* well founded in fact Akbar whose religious ideas had a breadth not usually found in other Muhammadan rulers no doubt allowed the portrayal of life forms in his Library at Fatehpur Sikri but there is no reason to suppose that Shah Jehan or Aurangzeb could have

countenanced for one moment such a violation of the tradition. This panel, is therefore an alien element here and should be treated as such.

To the south is the **RANG MAHAL**—so called from its lavish colour decoration. It was also the largest of residential apartments of the royal palace. From outside the wall is faced with stucco, the plaster surface being rendered to an egg-shell polish in keeping with marble masonry. The entire floor must have formerly been paved with marble leaving a space for the water aqueduct which passes along the entire length of the building. The original ceiling removed in the reign of Farrukh Siyyar is said to have been of sheet silver ornamented with flowers with a wash of gold while the windows over-looking the river were probably filled with vividly coloured panes similar to those remaining in some of the windows of the Royal Baths. About the shallow marble lotus-pool in the centre Sir Syed Ahmad Khan has given the following description :—

“It is fashioned in such a way that it

resembles a full blown flower. The particular beauty is this that when it is full of rippling water the foliage of the inlay appears to waive to and fro. In its centre is a beautiful flower like a cup of marble, moreover on each curving point and arched cusps, flowers and leaves of coloured stones spring from creeping plants and creeping plants from flowers and leaves. Within the cup is a hole through which the water bubbles up from a hidden channel underneath. The sheet of water falling from the edges of the cup and the waving of plants and flowers under the dancing water are nothing less than a scene of magic.

The aquaduct was fed from the *Nahar-i-Bahisht* (the stream of Paradise) which flowed in its marble channel along the whole length of the building between and beneath the several palaces and was supplied from the north end by a canal (now the Western Jamna Canal) constructed by one of Shah Jehan's engineers Ali Mardan Khan, who tapped the Jamna some 70 miles upstream.

Further south is another hall, **MUMTAZ MAHAL** which now accommodates a small,

museum of Archaeology. This museum is well worth a visit as it contains specimens of calligraphy, books, carpets, clothes in Mughal fashion, Mughal paintings, *shamans* etc. In order to enable visitors to visualise the interior arrangements, two of the western apartments in the KHWAB GAH and BAITHAK are furnished in the Mughal manner. These are perhaps the most striking exhibits in the fort.

To the north of RANG MAHAL there is a set of private apartments and a tower called the MUSSAMAN BURJ from its octagonal plan projecting over the river. A perforated marble screen adorns the central chamber. The decoration and tracery over it are exquisite. A representation of the "Scale of Justice" (*Mizan-i-Adal*) crowns the top.

### DIWAN-I-KHAS

Adjoining the royal private apartments is a magnificent structure, the DIWAN-I-KHAS (Hall of Private Audience) upon the construction of which Shah Jehan lavished much wealth.

This hall is probably the most graceful one in existence. Its wonderful ornamentation

of the walls with mosaic of precious stones and lustrous pillars give the apartment an iridescence unique in itself. The hall measures ninety feet by sixty-seven feet. An inscription in golden letters over the arches gives the proud assurance —

‘ If there be a paradise on earth,  
It’s here, it s here it s here ’

The famous Peacock Throne of which Tavernier has written so enthusiastically stood in the centre of this gilded chamber. The following description is taken from Mr Beresford’s account —

It was so called from its having the figures of the two peacocks standing behind it, their tails being expanded and the whole so inlaid with sapphires rubies, emeralds, pearls and other precious gems to appropriate colours as to represent life. The throne was six feet by four feet broad. It stood on six massive feet which with the body were of solid gold, supported by twelve pillars all richly emblazoned with costly gems and a fringe of pearls ornamented the borders of the canopy. Between the two peacocks stood the figure of a parrot said to

have been carved out of a single emerald ”

It took seven years to complete and its value was assessed at £ 12,037,500 This throne was carried away to Persia together with other plunders valued at £ 70,000,000 by Nadir Shah during his raid on Dehli in 1739

**THE ROYAL BATHS** can be seen on the north side of the Diwan-i-Khas connected by the water channel which runs beneath all the buildings They comprise of three rooms crowned with low domes now unhappily white-washed The floors in each room are embellished with *pieira-dura* (*Pachhikan*) inlay of the most exquisite and delicate pattern Fountain with reservoirs of marble are to be seen in every bath The water was obtained from the *Nahar-i-Bahisht* entering at the northern angle and collected and distributed in all the required directions by way of a scalloped marble cascade in the open centric arcade of the **SHAH BURJ**.

Adjacent to the Hammam or Royal Baths is the **MOTI MASJID** built of white and grey veined marble It has a small courtyard about forty ft square and the prayer chamber has three arches. The walls are ornamented in low

relief The decoration shows that the elegance and beauty of Mughal work had begun to degenerate into weak floridness This mosque was constructed during the reign of Aurangzeb for his personal use The present domes in replacement of the former ones, which were covered with gilded copper plates, are disproportionate

### HAYAT BAKSH GARDEN

In the north of these buildings lies the Hayat Baksh Garden The space covered is about 200 feet square **SHAH BURJ PAVILION** marks the north east corner and **BHADON** and the **SAWAN** pavilions named after two Hindu calendar months occupy the north and south boundaries

The idea underlying the plans of Mughal gardens was to arrange for free flow of water in channels sloping around squares in the form of raised terraces Each terrace was made up of four smaller squares—*charbagh* or four fold plot making up a combination of rectangles and straight lines Pools of water and fountains served as a setting for flowering plants Baths

and Hammam as well as graceful pavilions were provided on cardinal points. Shady trees and creepers were planted on the sides of the causeway. Some idea of the atmosphere and charm of these Mughal gardens can be formed from similar gardens laid out by Jehangir and Shah Jehan in Kashmir.

Beyond the Hayat Baksh Garden the road leads to Salimgarh, built in 1546 by Salim Shah. Except for the view over the river this outwork has no particular importance.

The road going south leads to the **DEHLI GATE** of the fort. Between the inner and outer gates stand two large stone elephants, now riderless, replaced here by Lord Curzon. Aurangzeb had these pieces of sculpture mutilated.

#### 41. JAME' MASJID

Shah Jehan built this mosque opposite to his fort between 1644-58. Approached by imposing flights of steps on three sides and unlike any other monument except the Buland Darwaza at Fatehpur Sikri, this mosque stands on a very high plinth and possesses three



elegant gateways The great doors of the East gate were formerly opened only for the Emperor on ceremonial attendance

The mosque is 200 feet in height The courtyard measures 325 feet square and has the usual fountain and a marble basin in the centre for ablutions At the four corners are angle towers The facade and domes make up a very pleasant design The two lofty minarets rise to 135 feet in height formed in alternate vertical stripes of sandstone and white marble and crowned by light marble cupolas on top which are only 7 feet lower than those of the Taj Mahal at Agra These cupolas have also vertical stripes in black marble The admixture of red sandstone with white marble gives a pie bald effect and thus detracts from elegance and purity of line Compared with this mosque the Moti Masjid in Agra Fort is a superb work of art, combining simplicity, purity and a fairy like elegance Around the three sides of the quadrangle runs an open sandstone cloister 15 feet wide, with graceful pillars

The prayer hall is 200 ft long and 90 ft



2 The Jai Prakas consists of two complementary concave hemispheres situated immediately south of the Samrat Yantra. It represents the interior hemisphere of the heavens. It is divided by six ribs of solid work and as many hollow places, the edges of which represent meridians at the distance of fifteen degrees from each other.

3 The Ram Yantra consists of two large circular structures complementary to each other situated south of the Jai Prakas. Each consists of a circular wall and a pillar at the centre. The height of the walls and pillar, from the graduated floor is equal to the inside radius of the building. They help in reading horizontal and vertical angles.

4 To the north west of the Samrat Yantra and some 140 feet away is the Misra Yantra. It combines in one building four separate instruments. One of these is Niyat chakra occupying the middle of the building and consists of a gnomon with two graduated semi-circles on either side. Joined to it is half of an equinoctial dial constructed on the same principle as the large Samrat Yantra. On the

east wall of the building is a graduated semi-circle called Dakshinovritti Yantra, used for obtaining meridian altitudes. The north wall of the Misra Yantra is inclined to the verticle of an angle of five degrees and is marked with a large graduated circle called Karka Rasi Valaya or 'Circle of the sign of the cancer'

The Observatory was built in accordance with the orders of the Emperor Muhammad Shah. It took seven years in preparing the tables. Jai Singh had made the observations himself. He built three other observatories also (at Jaipur, Benares and Ujjain). This man was a mathematician and astronomer of wide repute and was in touch with European astronomers of his time.

The Observatory buildings are a remarkable monument of scientific and historic value and form a dignified feature of New Dehli.

#### 43. TOMB OF SAFDAR JUNG

This is the last Mughal tomb and was built in 1753. It is situated halfway between Dehli and Qutub Minar. Laid out in the midst of a spacious garden it stands on a high platform

at the end of a paved walk. It is 90 ft square and is arranged in three storeys. Some of the fawn coloured stone work on it is very effective. In the tomb of this man who claimed the title of 'Piercer of battle ranks' there is an inscription. 'However great and pompous man be in the presence of his fellow men, he is small and humble before God.'

This tomb was erected nearly 200 years after that of Humayun and marks the decadence that had set in. While Humayun's tomb expresses in every line exultant vitality the tomb of Safdar Jung shows distinctly the artificial striving to reproduce the lost vigour and in doing so fails miserably.

#### 44 THE LAKSHMI NARAYAN TEMPLE

This temple in New Delhi is situated on a spur of the Ridge and is now popularly known as the Birla temple after the name of its pious and wealthy builder who constructed it at a cost of several lakhs of rupees. It is a modern temple and was completed in 1938. Its chief interest lies in a certain modernisation to which the ancient tradition of temple building has been subjected. The result is, however,

not very happy, for such has been the impact of western influence on the outlook of the designer that the indigenous idiom has practically been lost giving place to superficial, lifeless resemblances with the works of the past !

The broad design conforms to those of temples of the tenth to twelfth centuries. The temple has a main block, with several outlying structures. It is both a Vaishnavait and Sivaite temple for, there are in it, shrines for Vishnu, Siva, Durga and Krishna. The sculpture of the images which are life-size is smooth and precise but lacks the spiritual force which we find in early mediaeval sculpture or that of the Gupta period ! There are a number of frescoes and mural paintings reminiscent of the modern renaissance painting of the Bengal school, while some are in an ill-disguised European style, particularly those depicting scenes from the lives of the Sikh Gurus. But for the *Shikhara*s there is nothing remarkable about the architecture which is neither totally of ancient type nor altogether the vulgarised architecture of the decadent nineteenth century period.

A rather interesting feature is the building of artificial caves with cement and rubble in the garden of the temple. They are meant to indicate how the ancient ascetics lived in seclusion. Placed in the midst of a beautiful garden they are much frequented with the visitors of all classes. Electric lighting during the night—a modernisation from which one cannot escape even in a temple—has completely destroyed the “dim, religious light” atmosphere which one associates with and still finds in old temples! The vital weaknesses of the Birla temple are its absence of a religious atmosphere and the constructional defect which secures a uniform diffused light everywhere instead of the contrast of light and shade. With garish light and promise of amusement it so happens that the place has become more a fashionable resort for the westernised gentry of the town instead of being a religious shrine for the devotees and the spiritually minded. The introduction of the large size mirrors in the shrines of the temple which give a bizarre look to the interior is a shocking vulgarity, which can at once be avoided.

A relieving feature, however, in the whole ensemble is provided by life-size sculptures in the round which are mounted on pedestals in the garden. These are statues in pale-red sandstone of Asoka, Chandragupta II Vikramaditya, Prithvi Raj Chauhan, Maharaja Yudhishtir etc. who once held sway over Dehli. Their workmanship is of a high level and does great credit to the sculptors.

#### 45. THE BUDDHA TEMPLE

By the side of the Lakshmi Narayana Temple is a small temple dedicated to Buddha. This has also been built by Birla. In this temple there is evidence of much more refinement than in the Hindu temple. The Buddha's statue in seated posture is a replica of the Buddha statue from Sarnath. The frescoes on the walls are after the style of Ajanta and display considerable refinement and artistry. The atmosphere of the temple is full of serenity and dignity. The temple, though small, is wholly satisfactory and there is a strange tendency on entering the shrine to linger in it.



## THE BRITISH ARCHITECTURE OF DEHLI

Dehli's architecture under the British rule is the same as such architecture in other Indian cities, notably Calcutta, Bombay and Madras—a departmental architecture, the creation of Public Works Department engineers—and can lay no claim to æsthetic beauty. Great claims are made for the Viceroy's House, the Imperial Secretariat and the Assembly Chamber which were built on New Dehli being made the capital of India. They have been called by one writer the finest buildings in Asia and are stated to represent the eclectic school of architecture, that is to say, an architecture in which there is a synthesis of the best in all styles of architectures in the world, past and present. This tall claim cannot bear scrutiny. In the first place the lay out is ill conceived and banal, then the ornamentation out of place and garish, and what is most distressing is the introduction without any regard to unity of composition of features highly discordant and not unoften bordering on vulgarity. All these

bespeak of extreme poverty of creative talent, a lack of sense of rhythm and a confusion of mind perhaps unrivalled anywhere in the domain of architecture.

The obvious intention has been to out-rival the ancient monuments of the city and this has been sought to be achieved by sheer piling of stone which should at least have the effect of massiveness as in the unpretentious pyramids of Egypt but which on the contrary, by fundamentally defective design has an air of ridiculous clumsiness about it and produces an impression of cheapness and incompetence. In fact these buildings are tragedies in stone. The so-called eclecticism is nothing more than an unintelligent jumble of architectural factors without regard to suitability or propriety and as such, without any organic basis or dignity.

The architects to whom the work was entrusted came one from London and the other from South Africa. This selection was determined by the authorities on the ground that neither of them could be "unduly influenced by either past or recent architectural practice as far as India is concerned." The school of thought

represented by these foreign experts was un-Indian and it is therefore difficult to see how their creations could fit into the cultural traditions of the country "The Britishers in India, we are told, should do as did the ancient Romans in every country on which they planted their conquering foot. As those were wont to replace indigenous art with that of Rome so should we set out seal of conquest permanently on India by erection of examples of the best of British Art"\* Raised in this spirit how far they can lay claim to art which transcends political domination and racial prejudice, it is for the reader to judge

The Assembly Chamber is a circular structure in which the predominant feature is a row of Ionic columns, giving the building the appearance of a cage. A tiny dome in the centre, so sunk that only a fraction of it is visible from the ground level and which is absurdly out of proportion to the magnitude of the structure completes this ridiculous pseudo

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For further criticism of this hybrid style of architecture the reader is advised to see the article on Indian Architecture Section 2, MODERN in Indian Year Book and Who's Who for 1930-31, page 22.

Grecian building.

The Imperial Secretariat Building is in two blocks facing each other and may be easily mistaken for a pair of barracks or hostels. Its windows which are nothing more than narrow peep-holes, so disproportionate they are to the height and length of the walls, presents about as aesthetic an effect as the air-holes on an ocean-liner. The crowning absurdity are the rectangular columns on the roofs at the east end. They look like masts and as the flags are flown on them the bloated resemblance of the buildings with tramp steamers becomes almost complete. An inscription which occurs on the Southern gate of the North Block conveys a gratuitous insult to India and is concrete proof of the motifs of the builders. It reads as under :—

“Liberty will not descend to a people. A people must raise themselves to liberty. It is a blessing which must be earned before it can be enjoyed.”

The abode of the Representative of the Crown has a Buddhist dome over a structure which has a stunted appearance. A total

monolithic column stands before this building in complete isolation and without any architectural relation. On all these three 'works of architecture' are splashed carvings in low relief with dwarf elephants in the ground over garage like gateways.

The fourth monumental structure is the India Gate about a mile away. Perhaps no gate anywhere is so non-descript as this.

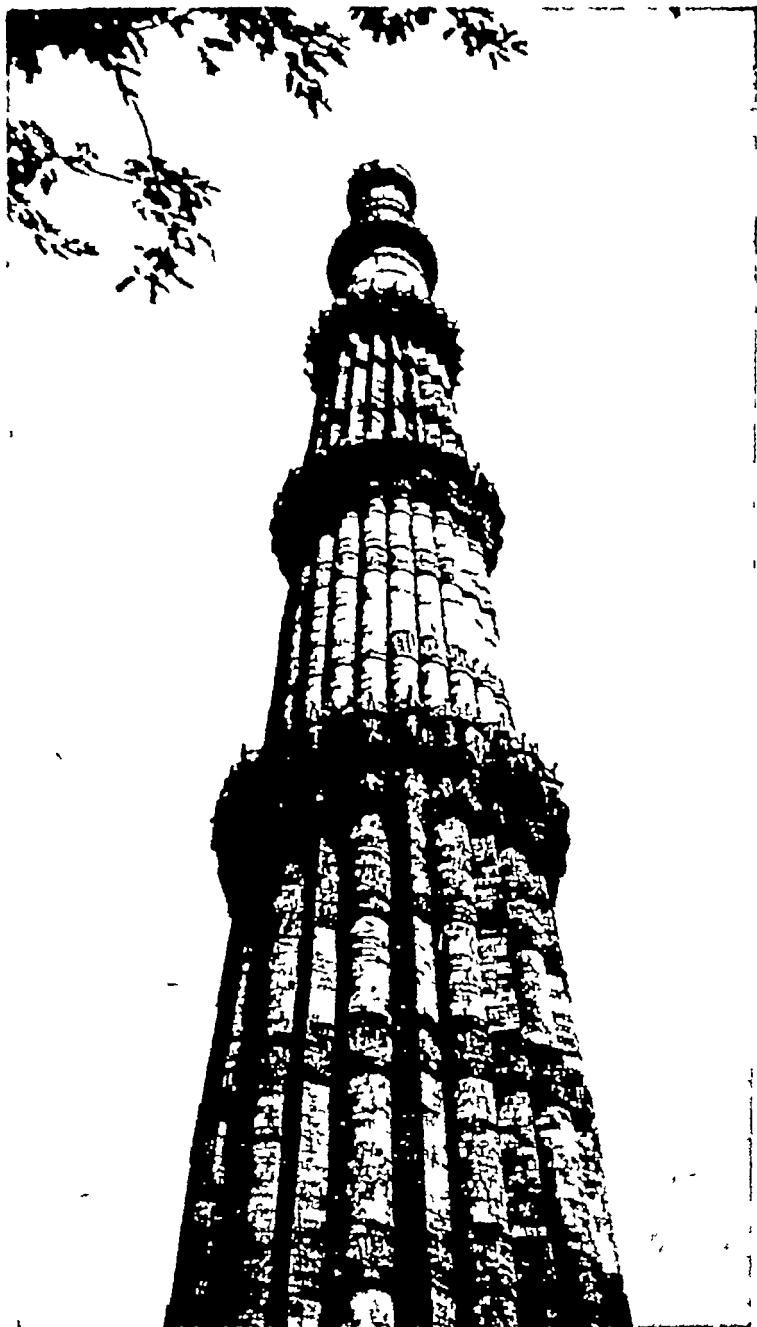
The Greek, Byzantine, Gothic, Turkish, Muslim, Persian, Buddhist and Hindu elements have been combined at random to produce the best of British Art. Thus it is evident that this British Art (of New Delhi) whatever the term may connote is of mixed origin and does not do credit to any great style of architecture.

Contrasted with this kind of mongrel architecture which has been imposed on the country, the ancient architectural monuments of India (of which the monuments of Delhi form only an insignificant part) acquire an almost supernatural beauty and aesthetic importance and become priceless heirlooms representing as they do successive cultures both Indian and

those allied to it in spiritual content Indian monuments were not raised to set "seal of conquest", but to glorify the Divine or as memorials to the great, and have thus the impress of a lofty idealism and spiritual consciousness and not infrequently the delicate quality and grace of a lyric poem.

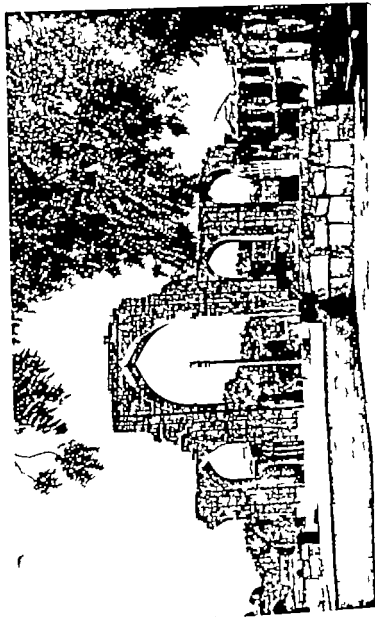
An appreciation of these Indian gems of architecture is a vital factor in the appreciation of not only Indian achievement and civilization but of the developement and making of humanity.





The Qutub Minar

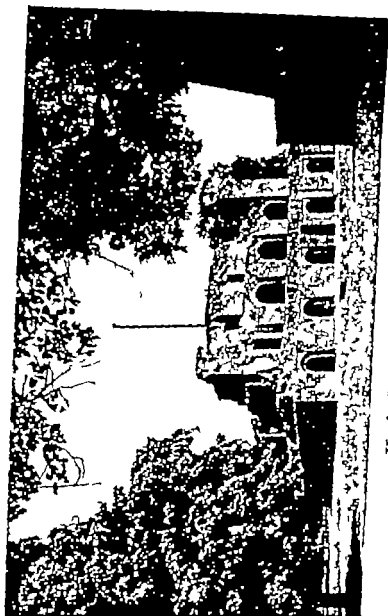




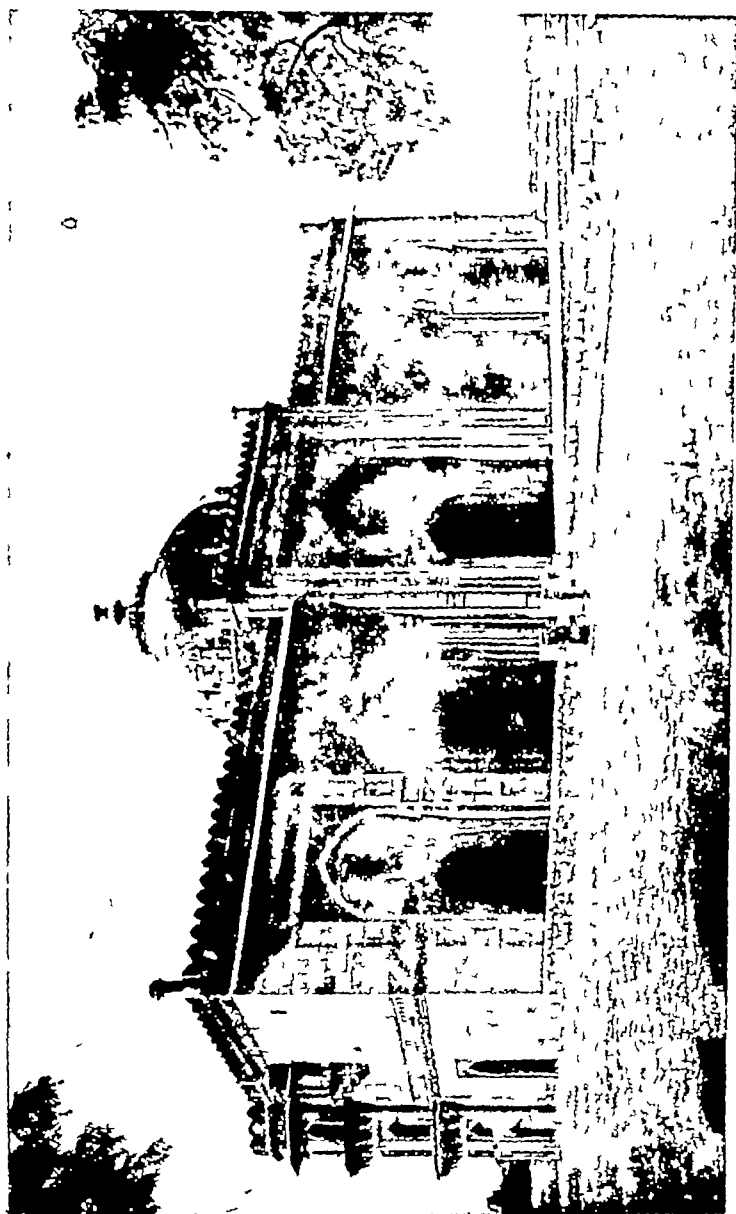
The Quwwat-ul Islam Mosque Screen arches and iron pillar



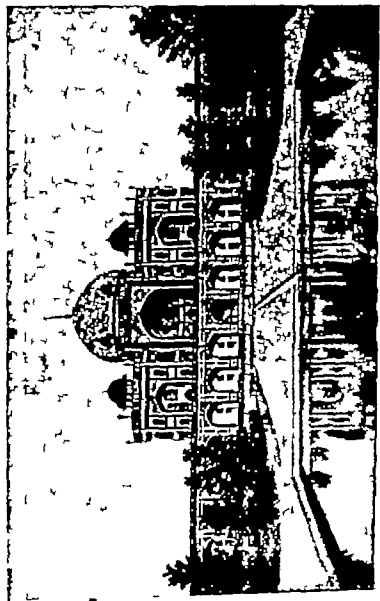
THE TOWN OF ALGER, ALGERIA



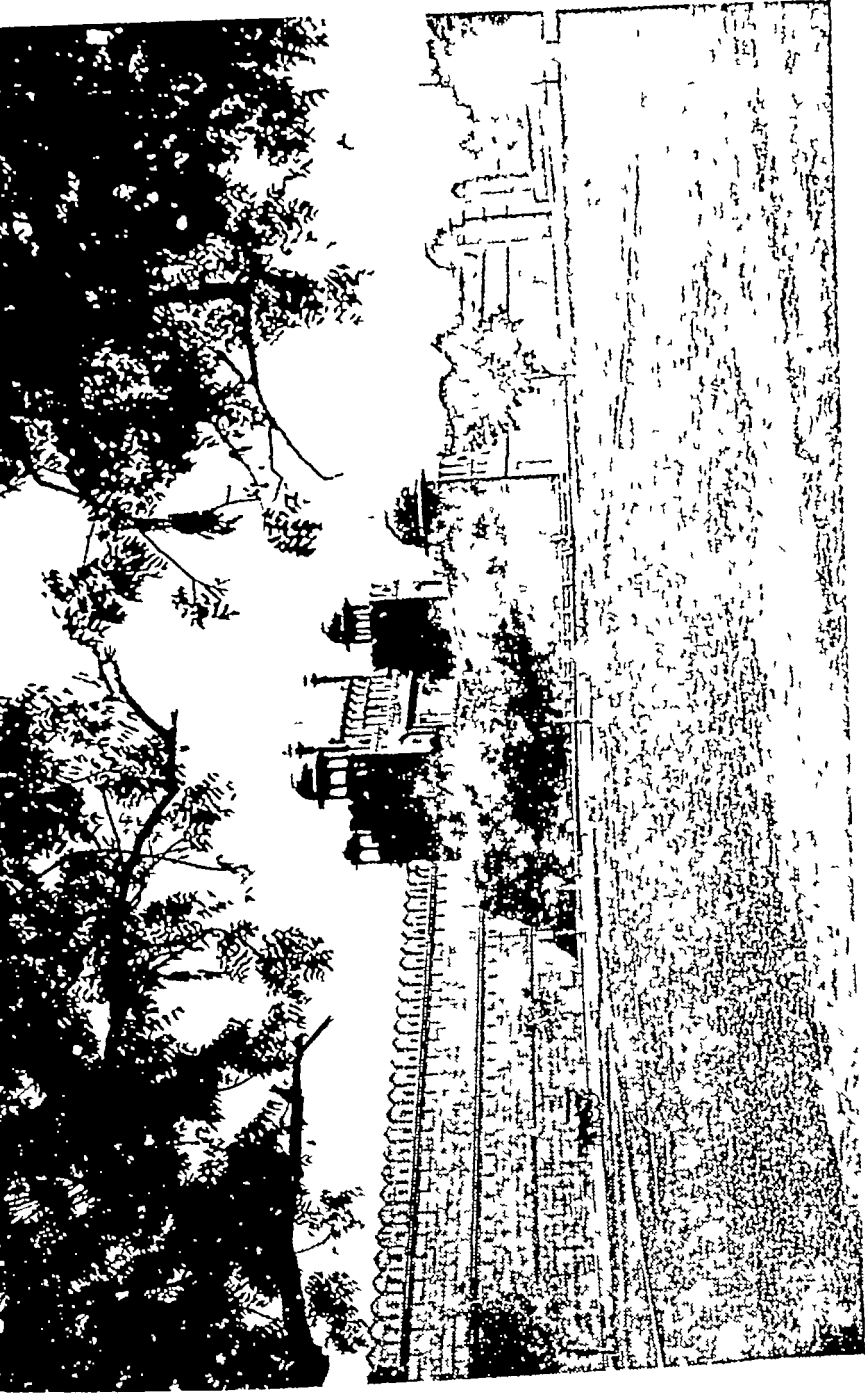
Kotla Feroz Shah Asoka Column



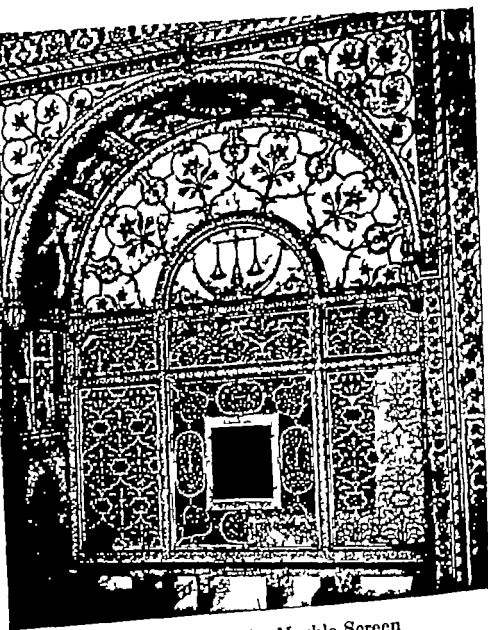
Purana Qila • Qila Kohna Masjid



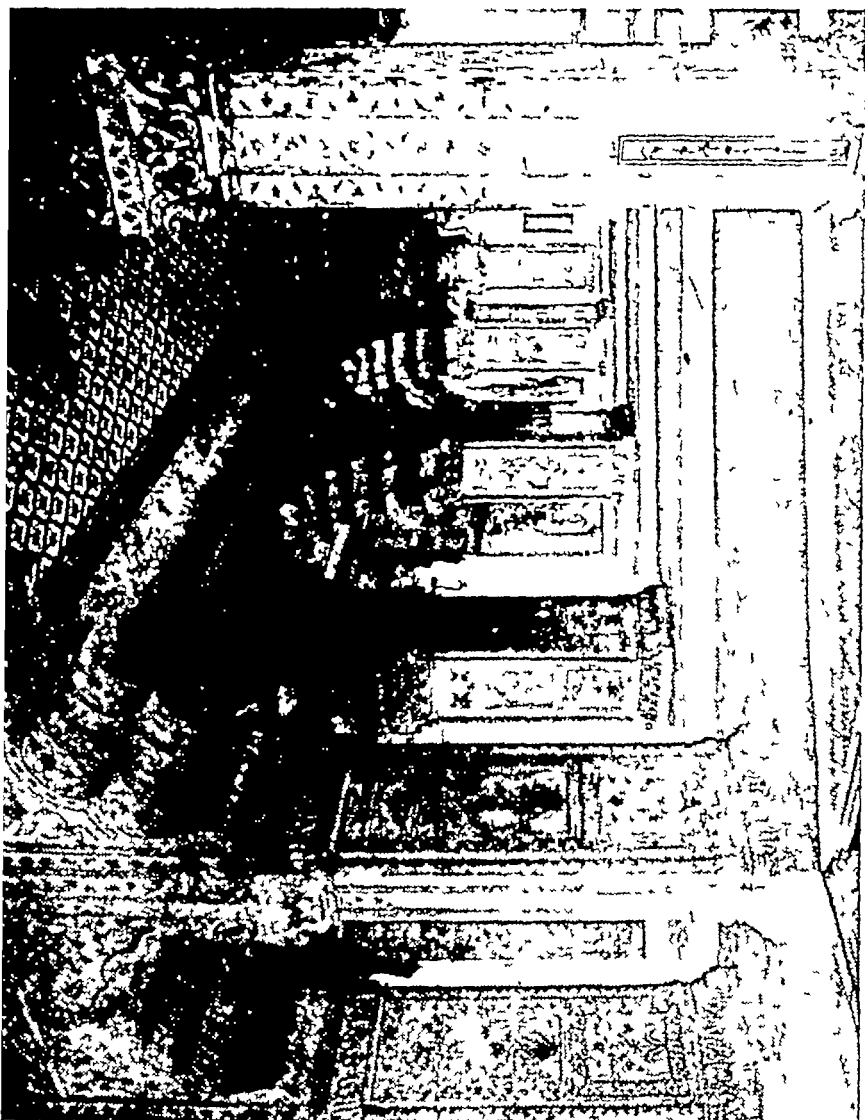
— The Tomb of Humayun



Lal Qila: Entrance Gateway



Lal Qila The Marble Screen

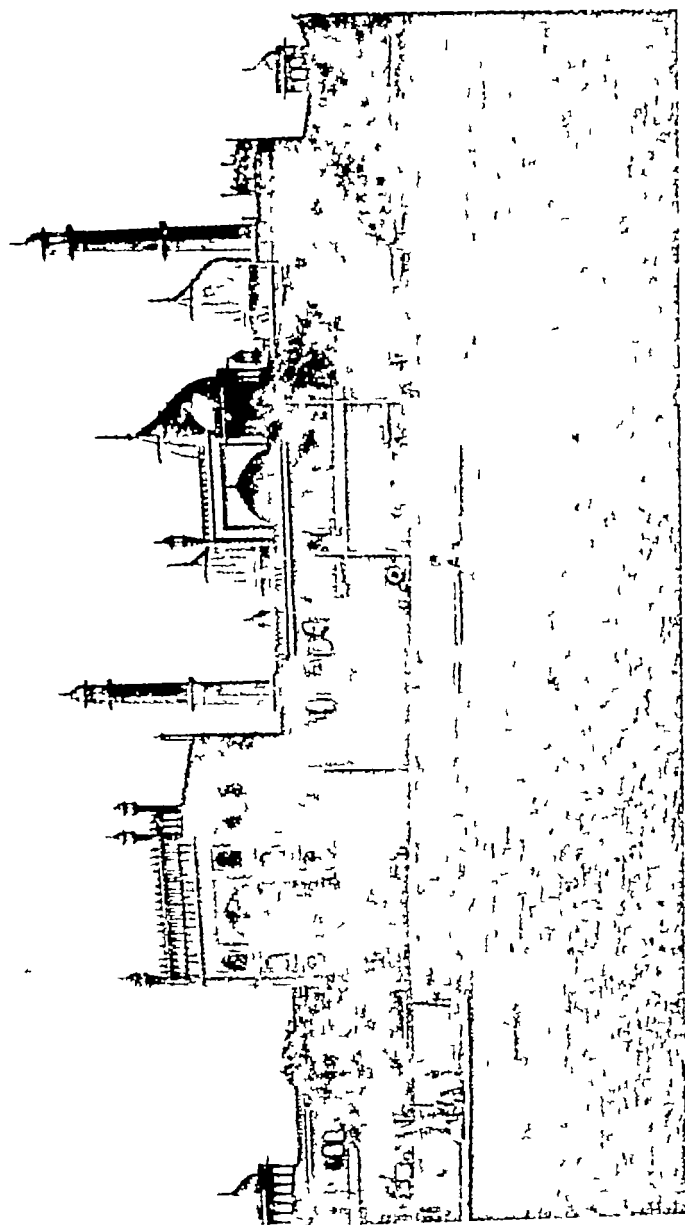


Lal Qila Diwan-i-Khas

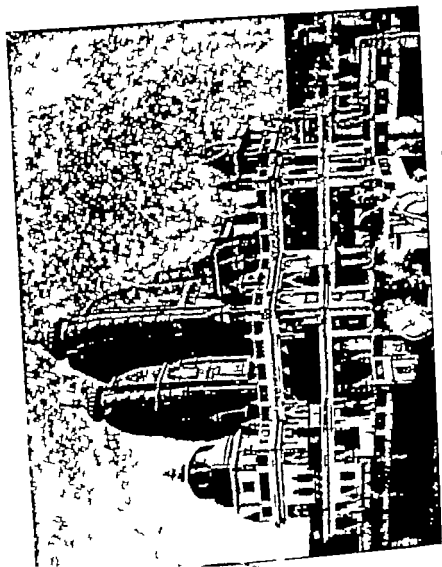




Lal Qila — Moti Masjid



Jame' Masjid



The Lakshmi Narain Temple

